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"THE VARSITY COACH"

A College Play in Four Acts

BY

EUNICE T. GRAY

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THE VARSITY COACH

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

ROBERT SELBY. *Assistant coach of 'Varsity Crew, commonly called "*BOB.*" He is lively, energetic and careless.*

MOUSIE KENT. *He is a typical fussy student "dig" or "grind."*

HOWARD DIXON. BOB'S *room-mate. A good comedy character.*

DICK ELSWORTH. *A member of the crew. He is fat and lazy.*

CHESTER ALLEN. *His room-mate—both jolly college boys.* CHESTER *is responsible and dignified.*

RUTH MOORE. *Leading female character. A sweet serious type of college girl, with much natural dignity and charm.*

MRS. MOORE. RUTH'S *aunt, in charge of boarding house for students. A widow who has made her way. Is gay and dressy and a "good fellow."*

MISS SERENA SELBY. BOB'S *aunt. A sweet maiden lady, gentle, refined, with old-fashioned ideas and manners, but with a kind and generous nature.*

GENEVIEVE ALLEN. *Typical college girl.* CHESTER'S *sister.*

ETHEL LYNN. *A pretty college girl.*

DAISY DOANE. *A fashionable boarding-school girl, bright and attractive.*

(*Additional students may be introduced at party in* BOB'S *room, and in the march and scenes on campus if desired, to add to atmosphere of college life.*)

COSTUMES MODERN.

SCENES.

ACT 1st. ROBERT SELBY'S *room.*
ACT 2nd. *Same as* ACT 1st.
ACT 3rd. *University Campus.*
ACT 4th. *Same as* ACT 3rd.

THE VARSITY COACH

ACT I.

SCENE:—ROBERT SELBY'S *room at college. Door* R. *in flat leading onto a rear porch. Desk* R. *Table* L. *Couch up* C. *Chairs, smoking-stand and other furnishings ad lib. College flags and banners to give college atmosphere.*

DISCOVERED ROBERT *at desk, working over papers. His hair is ruffled and he clutches his forehead in an effort to study while* HOWARD, DICK *and* CHESTER *play on mandolins and banjos, singing a college song as curtain rises. Song continues for a short time to show situation. Finally* ROBERT—("BOB") *rises and shakes fist at them.*

BOB. Ring off, you choir boys! Don't you see I want to work?

DICK. (*in amazement*) Work? You?

CHESTER. (*tone of extreme astonishment*) My dear Bobbie—worrrrk?

HOWARD. He's just trying to start something, fellows. He doesn't mean it. Work and Bobbie ne'er were friends.

BOB. I do mean it, you willie-boy, and if you weren't my room-mate and handy round the house I'd put you out to prove it.

DICK. (*mournfully*) The day after our triumphant regatta, and our assistant head-coach trying to grind!

CHESTER. That this should happen to our Robert —I am pained!

HOWARD. What is the old University coming to?

BOB. (*ignoring them, counts pages he has written*) One, two, three, four—Gee! I'll never get this thesis done!

HOWARD. I know what's the matter with Bobbie.

BOB. (*continues counting pages*) Five, six, seven, eight—(*shuffles through papers frantically searching for a missing number*)

DICK. (*pretends to weep*) Bob's coming down with the mumps, the lusty youngster!

BOB. Where in thunder's nine? (*looks under table, over papers again, and finally fishes it from under the couch. Anchors a pile under a paper-weight with a mighty thump*)

HOWARD. (*to others*) Hist! He's in love!

OMNES. (*lamentingly*) Ah!

BOB. (*rises and turns on them*) Beat it!

DICK. (*avoiding him*) She's a pretty girl, Bobbie, and we all love her!

BOB. (*takes him by the collar*) Clear out. (*throws him through door*)

CHESTER. (*as* BOB *starts for him*) Be not hasty, Robert.

BOB. Skidoo!

(CHESTER *makes hasty exit.*)

Bother the old thesis any way! Where was I?

HOWARD. (*close to door*) Over here by the door throwing out your friends. (*as* BOB *makes threatening movement*) I'll join them. (*exits.* BOB *seats himself at table again.* CHESTER *sticks his head in at door for a brief moment*) Excuse me if I seem to hurry!

(BOB *throws a paper-weight in his direction.*)

BOB. (*solus*) If theorem seven is true, it proves

two and six also true—(*starts to write, then looks toward door and speaks scornfully*) In love? Bosh! (*resumes*) If theorem seven is true—(*looks off ahead of him dreamily*) Ruthie—you're a peach! (*slams papers around*) Oh, hang this thesis! (*scribbles for a moment uninterruptedly*)

HOWARD. (*puts head into door, then enters*) Merry Christmas, Bob! Hate to interrupt. (*displays large package*) Found this in the hall and had to bring it in to keep the fellows from cribbing it.

BOB. (*without looking up*) Stack it away somewhere. I haven't time to look at it now. This is Thursday and almost the end of the term.

HOWARD. (*lays box on couch*) Seriously, Bob—why all this sudden flurry about studying?

BOB. Because I've just tumbled to it that for a year I've thought of nothing but athletics—all the mind I had was bent on muscle, and now that we've won the regatta——

HOWARD. Hooray! You bet we won!

BOB. (*continuing*) I've had time to take a look at the scholastic side of my score. I haven't my Mathematical thesis in yet. If I get back next term it will be a miracle. And if I don't—Watch my hair turning gray at the thought!

HOWARD. And a while back you talked of going in for the Fellowes prize and Phi Beta Kappa.

BOB. And forgot it all through my interest in our crew. Instead—another chap from our town has gone in for the prize—and I guess he'll win too.

HOWARD. I didn't know Mousie Kent was from your town. He's after an additional prize besides the Fellowes and Phi Beta Kappa. Did you know it?

BOB. What prize?

HOWARD. Ruth Moore. He's hard hit—poor old grind!

BOB. (*with attempted carelessness*) Well, that's all right. Miss Moore isn't mortgaged as yet, I be-

lieve. (*grinding his teeth*) I wish Mousie Kent boxed.

HOWARD. Why?

BOB. I've a sudden feeling I'd like to put on the gloves with him. He's out for other prizes, is he?

HOWARD. (*bends down and reads address printed on box*) For Mr. Robert Selby from Miss Serena Selby, Hammond, Illinois.

BOB. (*springs up, flinging down papers*) From Aunt Serena? Maybe it's eats—bless her heart! After keeping on diet with the crew to encourage them—I'm ready for some feed. Open her up—quick! (*goes to box and with* HOWARD *begins to unwrap it*)

HOWARD. But your thesis.

BOB. The thesis can wait. It ought to be used to it by this time.

HOWARD. (*as they work at box*) I remember like yesterday that pie she sent Thanksgiving—and that turkey—gobble gobble yum!

CHESTER. (*thrusts head through door*) Who said turkey? (*enters*)

DICK. (*same business*) Who uttered mince pie?

BOB. Come hither, idiots.

CHESTER. We will, bird of our feather.

BOB. (*with box in hands*) From Aunt Serena, boys she never forgets me. What a dear old soul she is. Been a mother to me as you know. When my mother died Aunt Serena took me and brought me up and sent me to this University. I sometimes think I am not doing all I can for her to recompense her for all this expense. I love her boys, love her as though she was my mother. Do you blame me? Now boys we will open the box. (*opens the box*)

OMNES. Hurrah for Aunt Serena.

(*Omnes gather about box.*)

BOB. Jump in, fellows, and help grab the goodies.

HOWARD. (*opens up one of the enclosed smaller boxes*) Hurrah! Cookies! Doughnuts!

DICK. (*making a discovery*) Here's a cake as big as Prof. Methewson's swelled head!

BOB. (*a long, flat package in his hand*) I can't make out whether this is dried beef or socks. (*feels of it through paper*)

HOWARD. Eat it and find out.

DICK. (*as he sets various jars on table*) Here's a jelly and a jam, and jam, and jamb, and we don't care a lamb!

BOB. (*undoes a big paper package and from it fall gaudily flowered cretonne furnishing—couch-cover, table spread, mantel-drapery, cushion-covers, laundry-bag etc.*) Holloa! What's this—that—those?

HOWARD. (*picks up laundry-bag and ties it around* BOB'S *waist*) Looks like a Dutch fair. Put on your little apron and find out.

(*"Laundry" should be in big letters across front of bag he puts on* BOB *as apron.*)

DICK. (*looks at articles on table*) Well, it's a Dutch feed all right.

CHESTER. Gifts from the flowery kingdom!

DICK. Who is your Oriental friend?

BOB. (*reads note he has discovered pinned to spread*) "Some things from your Aunt Serena to make your room look home-like." (*scratches head a bit ruefully*) Oh, Aunt Serena, home was never quite like unto this!

HOWARD. (*drapes flowered table-spread about his waist and dances around*) My, isn't this skipful!

CHESTER. Wow! Those colors give me a pain in the teeth. Hide them away, Bob, or the fellows will kill you.

DICK. (*looks then turns away shuddering*) Wow! My eye-sight wavers! Remove this visible inflammation!

HOWARD. Come on. (*opens a closet door*) Let's dump them all in here until the rag-man calls.

(*They gather up the draperies and throw them into the closet.*)

BOB. (*calmly but seriously*) Just kindly bring all those things out again, will you?

HOWARD. (*brings out couch-cover*) What for, Bob?

(DICK *and* CHESTER *also pick up draperies.*)

BOB. Howard, would you mind spreading that elegant Oriental drape you have in your hand over my couch?

HOWARD. Serious?

BOB. Yep.

HOWARD. (*spreads it over couch*) Well, since you're a friend of mine—and even if you are crazy—(*throws himself on couch after arranging spread*) This is the first time I ever reposed on a bed of roses. Fan me, Cleopatra!

BOB. Your piece, Dick, goes on the mantel, I believe.

CHESTER. (*examines the piece in his hand as* DICK *spreads drape on mantel*) Name this and you can have it!

BOB. We'll call that a table-spread.

(CHESTER *waltzes over to table and puts on the spread—addresses it.*)

CHESTER. Oh, you wriggly tomato vine!

(BOB *does not seem to know what to do with some gaudy cushion covers. He puts one on the back of a chair, one over the corner of a picture, and spreads out one on the chest of the recumbent* HOWARD.)

HOWARD. Cover me over with beautiful flowers!

CHESTER. (*in deep tones*) The crazy house is now

ready to receive inmates. No one admitted through the key-hole!

DICK. I say, Bob. (*seriously*) You're not going to inflict these flowered nightmare things on your friends that never did you any harm?

CHESTER. Banish them, Bobbie, or we'll have to call you Grandma Bobinette!

BOB. You can call me what you please. But Aunt Serena liked these things—bless her dear kind heart! She liked them, and sent them thinking to please me. And for that reason if no other they stay right out in plain sight even if they put your eyes out and remove your teeth. All of you fellows can put that in your pipes and smoke it.

HOWARD. (*slowly sits up, staring at* BOB, *and at the others who stare back at him and then at* BOB. BOB *stands with arms folded in attitude of defiance.* HOWARD *speaks slowly and in deep tones of command*) Everybody smoke!

(*Omnes go through solemn pantomime of puffing at pipes.* BOB *laughs and starts to pass around a box of cakes.*)

BOB. Cookies! Help yourself.

DICK. (*taking cookies from box*) I say—it seems some good to be able to eat without stopping to think whether it will injure your stroke!

CHESTER. (*takes cake*) I'm starved. I've been on the lake all morning.

BOB. War's over now, Sonnie. Can't you break practice?

CHESTER. This was for pleasure.

BOB. How many of her?

CHESTER. My sister and Daisy Doane. I rowed them up to the point and back just to show how we did it. (*goes through vigorous rowing motions*)

HOWARD. (*displaying lively interest*) I say—is Daisy Doane here?

CHESTER. She came up to the regatta yesterday with Genevieve. Didn't you see her?

HOWARD. I never saw anything from sun-up 'till sun-down but this old chap's anxious face. Do you suppose Howard Dixon, room-mate of the renowned assistant coach here (*indicates* BOB) could see anything at all the day of the race? Her hat was trimmed with some yellow bunches or other, wasn't it?

BOB. That shows how bad his eye-sight was.

HOWARD. How long is she going to stay, Chet?

CHESTER. The rest of the week with my sister Genevieve.

BOB. (*animatedly*) Lasso her sure for the feed here in my room to-morrow night. Will you?

CHESTER. (*mouth full of cake*) Mhmh!

BOB. Talking about feed—let's save something for the ladies.

(*Passes swiftly along and takes cakes from mouths and hands of boys, dumping them back in the box.*)

HOWARD. Feed? Up here in our room?

BOB. Yes, with a view of the illuminated lake afterward from our balcony.

CHESTER. (*walks to window overlooking lake*) Keen idea! The view will be great and the girls will think it is a lark to be entertained in your room.

DICK. Who will chaperone?

HOWARD. Mrs. Moore, she's just the person.

DICK. Has Mrs. Moore agreed to chaperone? (*knock at door*)

BOB. That's the answer now. Mrs. Moore's knock, or you can kick me.

HOWARD. You've a kick coming all right. (*as* BOB *goes toward door the other fellows line up raising a foot as if to kick if he is mistaken*)

(*Enter* MRS. MOORE, *gazes in amazement at fellows standing in a row.*)

MRS. MOORE. Well, what did you boys think was coming in? A cane-rush?

BOB. Excuse their bad manners and keep your eye on me, Mrs. Moore. Have a chair?

MRS. MOORE. (*goes to sit on couch. Looks in amazement at bright flowers and hesitates*) Wh—why—who—what——

DICK. Bob's room has broken out in a rash, Mrs. Moore.

BOB. Just received a home supply from my Aunt Serena——

HOWARD. Not so explosive as it looks. You're safe, Mrs. Moore.

MRS. MOORE. (*as she sits*) Well, what is the idea of this affair to-morrow night? It seems to me when there has been so much going on——

BOB. (*wheedlingly*) Now, you're not going to object, Mrs. Moore, I know you're not. You're a valuable little member of our crew, you know——

MRS. MOORE. None of your coaching tactics here, Bobbie Selby. I say there's been too much nonsense going on of late, and somebody's studies are going to suffer.

BOB. Going to? (*scratches head ruefully*) If it were only "going to!" (*turns to her appealingly*) But with the lake illumination to-morrow night——

HOWARD. (*wheedlingly, sitting other side of her*) And when Bob's promised the girls the view from his balcony here——

DICK. (*coming closer*) And with Bobbie's aunt sending him a carload of feed just in time——

BOB. Surely you'll lend us your presence.

MRS. MOORE. (*shakes head "no"*) You can't wheedle me, Bobbie Selby.

BOB. (*jollying her*) Not for the world! Fellows,

did you hear her say I couldn't wheedle her? And she's right. Mrs. Moore is one woman in a thousand——

(MRS. MOORE *clears throat and rather consciously fixes hair.*)

BOB. (*continued*) She understands college men down to the ground! (MRS. MOORE *spreads out a fan and waves it in a manner to show that she is highly flattered*) She's just the one to run the house for a lot of rah rah boys! That's why when she makes up her mind that she is the one to chaperone the party to-morrow night it's no use any of you fellows trying to work in your sisters and your cousins and your aunts. We have invited the Glee Club who have accepted, too. It's Mrs. Moore or no one, say I!

(*Surreptitiously pokes* CHESTER *in the stomach with his elbow.* CHESTER *doubles over, making a wry face.*)

MRS. MOORE. (*smiles, flattered into acceptance*) Well, how many extra cups will you need?

BOB. Nine, I believe, counting in Miss Doane.

HOWARD. (*winking at other boys*) Did you count in Ruthie, Bob?

BOB. I began with Ruthie.

DICK. Of course you didn't need to invite Ruthie if you didn't wish it, Bob.

BOB. (*nettled*) What lunatic said I didn't wish to? Quit your kidding.

CHESTER. Mrs. Moore, did you ever notice how conscientiously Bob avoids the society of your niece?

MRS. MOORE. I trust that Ruthie's mind is entirely on her studies, and that if I permit her to come here to-morrow evening——

BOB. (*as if suddenly recollecting*) Spoons! Spoons!

MRS. MOORE. (*startled*) WHAT?

BOB. And plates and forks—that's what I meant.

BOB. I have had a box from home, we are going to have a feed, bread and jam, doughnuts and chocolate cake.

MRS. MOORE. That sounds good, a regular boarding-school spread.

HOWARD. Yes and we want you too, Mrs. Moore. You are the best ever.

MRS. MOORE. You can have me, and don't you want my lunch napkins? Paper ones are so clammy.

BOB. Thanks, Mrs. Moore, you are certainly generous.

MRS. MOORE. (*rising*) Well, I guess for this once I'll consent to let you have all the extra dishes you want. The room must be in apple-pie order, though, when the girls come. Don't forget that!

OMNES. We won't!

CHESTER. What are we going to have to drink, Mrs. Moore?

BOB. Coffee, you inebriate. What did you suppose?

DICK. Tea is the ladies' drink.

BOB. Ladies don't drink anyhow—they merely sip!

(*Makes delicate imitative movement.*)

CHESTER. Well, my sister won't touch coffee at night. Says she can't sleep if she as much as smells it.

DICK. I SAID tea!

HOWARD. We had coffee at Baxter's chafing-dish party. This will be a Kaffee Klatch all right.

BOB. I'll bet Mrs. Moore says coffee!

DICK. I can hear her warble tea!

HOWARD. Mrs. Moore for Mocha and Java!

CHESTER. I see tea in her eye!

BOB. We stand or fall by your decision, Mrs. Moore.

MRS. MOORE. (*after slight pause*) Chocolate.

OMNES. Of course!

BOB. Why didn't we think of that before?

MRS. MOORE. (*rises*) Well, this is my busy day, go ahead with your party, boys, and I'll help you.

ALL. Thanks, Mrs. Moore.

MRS. MOORE. Now I must be off. Good-night boys!

OMNES. Thanks. Good-night etc. (*ad lib.*)

(*Exit* MRS. MOORE.)

BOB. Me back to my thesis now and the midnight oil!

DICK. We mustn't forget student-body election in the gay social whirl.

BOB. That's so, it's Monday afternoon isn't it?

CHESTER. Tuesday at two P. M. You are going to be the goat too, and don't you forget it.

BOB. Me? I'm not up for office, I haven't the time fellows, don't ask me.

CHESTER. We aren't a-askin' you, we are goin' to put you in without asking, and you won't refuse, why, Bob the salary is a thousand!

BOB. You mean you want to see me elected head-coach?

DICK. Sure.

BOB. (*shakes his head*) Don't count on it fellows. I'd like it well enough, the job as well as the money, but Harding is the man for it. All the men have confidence in him and he has more time than I have.

HOWARD. Time nothing. You can do it twenty times easier than Harding and we are going to put you in.

CHESTER. Don't get diggy, be game, you can be coach just as easy as that—if you make up your mind to it.

BOB. Well you fellows are mighty encouraging, thanks, I'll think it over. Of course I'd like it, but —well, Harding has good friends too.

HOWARD. (*grandly*) Not like us. (*three fellows line up with arms on each other's shoulders and sing a line or two of 'and we are jolly good fellows,' etc.*)

BOB. (*runs his hand through his hair*) Of course I'd like it—you fellows are mighty encouraging—but—I—(*roars at them*) Get out of here and let me alone! (*omnes make hasty exit.* BOB *sits at desk and gets to work at thesis again*) The boys want me for head coach, do they? Wonder if I stand any chance of being elected? I'd be a fool not to take it and the thousand a year that goes with it. That would help me without Aunt Serena spending so much of her money for me, but—Oh, you thesis! Shall I—Oh shall I ever conquer you.

(*Dips pen in ink and madly scribbles.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—*Same as* ACT I. *Room is in company order. Cushion-covers are now on cushions instead of draped around loose. Table* L. *at which* MRS. MOORE *sits presiding over a chafing-dish. Girls are in evening dress. They all have napkins and plates in their laps and are chattering about the regatta as curtain rises.*

DISCOVERED:—BOB, CHESTER, DICK, HOWARD, MRS. MOORE, RUTH, ETHEL, DAISY, *and* GENEVIEVE. *Others may be added if wished.*

DICK. Bob, that rare-bit you concocted was certainly a lallapaloozle!

ETHEL. So say we all of us!

MRS. MOORE. To my mind the delicacies from Mr. Selby's aunt should have the highest honors. She seems a sort of guardian angel—is always sending him something.

BOB. A dear little old-fashioned angel—that's just what she is! I wish you might meet her, Ruth.

(*Turns to* RUTH *who is sitting at his side.*)

RUTH. I was away the last time she visited you, I believe.

BOB. That was in my Freshman year. She came down and saw me safely installed at Professor Brown's with Mousie Kent as a room-mate.

RUTH. Oh, then you and Mousie Kent WERE friends once upon a time!

CHESTER. That was before they were rivals!

RUTH. (*perplexed*) Rivals?

BOB. (*hastily*) He's merely babbling, Ruth—it's a habit of his. When I went on the crew it looked as if I ought to be nearer the athletic men, so I left Mousie and picked up Howard here.

CHESTER. Pretty poor pickins!

HOWARD. Don't listen to Chet's slander, Miss Doane. I'm mighty nice furniture when you get used to my looks.

DAISY. But I'm not searching for furniture.

HOWARD. (*moves slightly away from her side*) Stung! Just for that you shan't have anything more to eat!

(*Takes plate etc. from her lap and sets them on table. Others follow suit during ensuing conversation.*)

DICK. You broke Bob up on his study habits pretty well that first year, Howard.

HOWARD. I thought it was up to me to do so, after I discovered his aquatic skill.

CHESTER. It's great to be an all-round athlete

like Bob. He's a prize card for the old university all right!

BOB. What do you want for that, Chet? Another cookie? Oh here comes the Glee Club. (*Glee Club enters*)

BOB. (*shaking hands with each of the Glee Club*) Welcome—Welcome to our party. (*omnes*) Welcome. Welcome. (*the Glee Club bowing, after which sing two or three songs. Ten or fifteen minutes of music or other specialities should be introduced here, then the extra characters or Glee Club exit during the applause of all the characters*)

BOB. They are great—simply great—don't you think so, Mrs. Moore?

MRS. MOORE. We certainly do—but— Don't forget to show the girls some of your trophies, Bob.

BOB. (*rather bashfully*) They wouldn't be interested.

DAISY. Wouldn't we? That's all you know about girls.

BOB. I don't even know that much, but I'm willing to learn.

HOWARD. (*takes articles from drawer*) Badge—medal—cup!

GENEVIEVE. (*holding up badge*) What won you this?

BOB. Beating the previous college record on a high-pole vault by a quarter of an inch—that's all.

DAISY. (*holds up medal*) What's this?

BOB. A tennis trophy won from a rival college team last year. Howard was my partner.

HOWARD. A pretty limp one. I was off my feed at the time.

DICK. Yep, Bob was master your side of the net.

RUTH. I remember those slashing cross cuts and sizzling passes he made as if it were but yesterday!

BOB. (*delighted*) You remember, Ruth? You were interested enough for that?

RUTH. (*mischievously*) Interested in *tennis*—yes!

HOWARD. (*delighted*) Stung! I'm not the only one.

MRS. MOORE. And that cup, Mr. Selby.

BOB. Won by our crew last year. I was a feather-weight, and my pull being steady and strong they made me head-stroke.

HOWARD. That was the time old Dick here fainted in the scull and almost lost us the race.

DICK. Don't! Tell a man that he was a criminal, but never remind him that he muffed his crew!

BOB. We won out anyhow—old boy. The Grays were half a length behind when it happened, and in a jiffy they skimmed past and left us wabbling at their heels. I was working like a machine at the time, putting forth all my strength as I thought, when all at once old Brown—the head-coach—gave a hoarse whisper at me through the megaphone: "You going to let 'em get away with it, Bobbie? It's all up to you!" Brown was a wonder! He knew I was using only half the power in me, though I didn't know it myself. We were only a few lengths from the goal when he said it, and it had to be a spurt or nothing, and then I found out that I'd just been asleep before. My muscles bulged out like live steel —I found myself breathing clear down to my toes. "Keep up with Bobbie," the coach called to the other half naked, sweating boys toiling in the scull, and in another moment we shot past the Grays and touched goal a third of a length ahead. That Brown was a wonder!

MRS. MOORE. Our Robert was the wonder!

DICK. You bet he was. Three cheers for our next head-coach!

OMNES. Rah! Rah! Rah! (*a bright light is seen through balcony door*)

HOWARD. (*who has stepped out on balcony during*

the cheering enters hurriedly) I say we are missing the illumination, come on out on the balcony, the Lake looks great!

BOB. (*turns vaguely*) Yes, we mustn't miss it.

DICK. (*glances at watch*) It's time for the show, sure enough, we don't want to miss the fire-works.

GENEVIEVE. (*rises*) O, no, let's go out and see it!

CHESTER. Come on Mrs. Moore. (*places wrap about her and leads her and* ETHEL *out*)

HOWARD. (*takes* DAISY, *ushers her out*)

BOB. (*carries chair and cushions out,* DICK *and* GENEVIEVE *follow,* RUTH *remains looking at Kodak album,* BOB *enters*)

BOB. Coming, Ruth?

RUTH. Are these pictures of your home, Bob?

BOB. Yes, snap-shots around the place.

RUTH. Isn't it a picturesque town?

BOB. Yes, Hammond is a nice little town, one of those neighborly little villages where everybody leads the simple life, and where there has never been a breath of scandal. Our family has lived in the same house in that town ever since it was founded, in fact my grandfather founded the town.

RUTH. Isn't that wonderful! How different from this place! Even as a University town, it has an air of modern superficiality, which somehow seems to destroy all homeliness.

BOB. You are a serious little woman, aren't you Ruth? I wonder what you think of me?

RUTH. Fishing Bob?

BOB. No, honest, I wish I could think there was something in my rattle-pate that could make you like me ever so little, Ruth.

RUTH. (*rises and goes toward window*) O, Bob, don't be sentimental. We are missing the illumination. (*moves toward exit to balcony*)

BOB. I wanted you to miss some of the fireworks and talk to me.

RUTH. About what?

BOB. About the little grouch you've had lately. I can feel that you approve of me even less than usual—and I'd like to know why.

RUTH. (*looking down, fools with the scarf*) What difference does it make whether I approve of you or not?

BOB. Do you—honestly—wish me to—answer that question?

RUTH. (*startled*) Not now—no!

BOB. (*seats himself on couch beside her*) I can say this much—that I care worlds for your good opinion.

RUTH. Why don't you prove it then?

BOB. How?

RUTH. (*with an impatient sigh*) I see that you have entirely forgotten that little lecture I read you after you first went in for athletics.

BOB. So—*that's* it!

RUTH. Yes, that's it. I don't know why I should care what you make of yourself——

BOB. Do you care? Ruthie, say you do, and you can lead me around with a dog-collar and chain!

RUTH. I don't think they'd become you, Bobbie.

BOB. Tell me my sins.

RUTH. Oh, they're not sins—but it's athletics, society, dramatics—everything—except just plain study. It's a wonder you aren't flunked out!

BOB. I had a slight scare on that subject myself. But I've always been lucky——

RUTH. There you are! That's all you care. You've forgotten everything but that it's great to be an all round athlete. Your success has made you undervalue the mental part of college life—the part that prepares you for your actual work in the world.

BOB. (*slowly*) I guess that's about right. But if I try to brace up for your sweet sake——

RUTH. No—no sentimental spasms of conscience

for MY sweet sake. For the sake of your aunt Serena,—or better still for your own sake—but leave me out of it.

BOB. I want to make good, Ruth, for Aunt Serena's sake as well as yours. She expected great things of me; my father was a man with a fine mind and limited opportunities and she hoped that I would do the things which he longed to do. I know I have been a disappointment all around. (*rises and walks away moodily*) Whether I have failed as a student or not—I'm a failure with you all right. That's plain to be seen, and it hurts, Ruth—it hurts.

(*Laughing voices from balcony*)

DICK. (*heard from balcony*) Bob, Bob, come here!

MRS. MOORE. (*from balcony*) Ruth, where are you?

BOB. Shall we go?

RUTH. (*shakes head*) Please leave me alone a little while. I believe I'm cross, and I want to get over it.

(BOB *bows, and exits onto balcony.*)

RUTH. (*takes up the silver cup*) Bob, dear, big, wonderful Bob! If you can only be shamed into making the most of yourself—(*knock at outside door.* RUTH *calls toward window but just as she speaks there is a gale of laughter that drowns her out*) Bob, some one at the door! (*after a pause, she goes and opens door herself.* MISS SELBY *steps in, carrying a bag*)

MISS SELBY. (*hesitating on threshold*) Good-evening. I think I have made a mistake. Can you tell me which is Mr. Selby's, Mr. Robert Selby's room? The maid told me this was it, but she must have misdirected me.

RUTH. This is Mr. Selby's room. Will you come in?

MISS SELBY. (*mildly amazed*) It is? (*comes in and looks about curiously*) I am his aunt, Miss Selby, I came up in the 'bus—and—can you tell me—? No, you needn't! (*looks about with pride*) How proud the dear boy must have been of the things I sent him to put them up so soon!

RUTH. Oh, then you're his Aunt Serena!

MISS SELBY. Yes, I got home-sick to see him and just thought I'd run down and take him by surprise. (*hands* RUTH *a letter*) Here's a letter I found on the little table just outside in the hall. It's addressed to Robert—so that made me feel sure this was his room.

RUTH. I'll place it right here on his desk.

MISS SELBY. And where is the dear boy?

RUTH. I was just going to call him. He's on the balcony with a little party he invited to see the illumination on the lake in honor of the regatta triumph.

MISS SELBY. (*stops her as she starts toward balcony door*) Don't call him—not right now, at least. Let me rest just a minute first.

(RUTH *runs back and sets a chair for her.*)

RUTH. Let me help you off with your bonnet. You must be very tired. It's quite a journey from Hammond, I understand. Bob will be so surprised! (*she puts* MISS SELBY'S *hat and wrap to one side*)

MISS SELBY. (*tremulously*) And do you think he'll be glad to see me? He has such hosts of young friends—and I'm afraid I'm getting sort of old and out of it.

RUTH. (*indignantly*) Out of it? Our dear fathers and mothers and Aunt Serenas are never old and out of it in the hearts of those who love them. They're just the precious jewels of our lives! Never let Bob hear you talk that way—he wouldn't like it!

MISS SELBY. (*comforted*) Well, mebbe not.

RUTH. (*pours chocolate and serves her*) Here's a cup of chocolate for you, and one of your own fine cookies.

MISS SELBY. Thank you, child. (*as she sips*) I hope the girl Bob writes so much about is something like you, but I don't suppose there's any such good luck. There's no accountin' for young men's tastes. Ho hum! I reckon that's why I'm still single myself! (*sips*)

RUTH. (*displays jealousy in spite of herself*) He —writes—to you—about some girl?

MISS SELBY. Yes—her name is—Esther something or other.

RUTH. (*thinking*) Esther!

MISS SELBY. KNOW her?

RUTH. (*rather coldly*) I don't believe I have that pleasure.

MISS SELBY. Shaw—no! Esther's not the name. But it's another of those old fashioned ones LIKE Esther—it's Ruth.

RUTH. (*sighs happily*) Ruth?

MISS SELBY. Know her?

RUTH. I ought to.

MISS SELBY. What kind of a girl is she?

RUTH. I think you'd better put that question to Bob instead of me.

MISS SELBY. I'm so glad the dear boy's won the prize! I reckon that is really what brought me here.

RUTH. (*puzzled*) The prize?

MISS SELBY. Yes, the Fellowes prize. O, he does not know that I know any thing about it, but the Hammond paper printed a long article last week and it seems practically certain that a Hammond boy has won it. When I read it I felt that I must come down and be with Robert when it was awarded.

RUTH. Yes. (*faintly*) yes.—but—it hasn't been awarded yet, you know. Miss Selby, there is always a possibility of its going to some other aspirant.

MISS SELBY. But it is practically settled and I know Bob will win it, for he knows that there is nothing that would please me more.

RUTH. Bob has done so many other things in college, Miss Selby, that he really does not need to win a scholarship prize to make him a hero.

MISS SELBY. What kind of things?

RUTH. He is one of the most popular men in the whole University, he is President of one Club and (MISS SELBY *nods disinterestedly*) he is assistant coach of the crew and——

MISS SELBY. I should think those things would be very distracting to his studies.

RUTH. O, not at all, but Miss Selby, there's another Hammond boy in college, you know, Mousie Kent—perhaps the paper meant him.

MISS SELBY. (*with serene complacency*) No it didn't—it couldn't. Bob isn't going to disappoint his Aunt Serena like that.

BOB. (*appears in balcony door*) Ruth, they're asking for you. (*as* MISS SELBY *rises and faces him*) Why, it can't be—no—yes—my dear Aunt Serena! Straight from the skies! (*rushes over and embraces her*)

MISS SELBY. (*livens up at sight of* BOB) No, not from the skies—from Hammond. Pretty far in the other direction. My dear Robert, how good it is to see you again. (*holds him at arms' length*) You are looking splendid! You told me you were half starved, you scamp. You do look thin that's a fact. You have been working too hard.

BOB. That is the result of training, Aunt Serena. I wish you had been down here for the race. We are celebrating our victory to-night, out of the dandy box you sent me. (*puts arm around her affectionately*) You look just as sweet as ever. Isn't she a dear little woman, Ruth? (*turns to* RUTH) Do you wonder I'm proud of my little aunt?

MISS SELBY. Ruth! Good gracious—is that Ruth? And I've been askin' her what kind of a girl the Ruth was that you're in love with.

RUTH. (*turns away embarrassed*) Oh, Miss Selby!

MISS SELBY. (*enthusiastically to* BOB) I've been a readin' about the Fellowes prize, and I came down hopin' to see them bestow it on you.

BOB. But Aunt Serena, I never said I was competing for it.

MISS SELBY. 'Course not. You never said you was goin' to win the boat race neither 'til after you'd up and done it. (*picks up letter from desk*) Here's a letter I brought in for you.

BOB. (*receives it*) Excuse me while I take a look.

MISS SELBY. I don't like the way you've draped that mantel-piece. (*goes over to it*—BOB *and* RUTH *at other side of room*)

BOB. (*opens letter; takes out pink card; in a low tone to* RUTH) The faculty has sent me the pink card, Ruth. That means I've flunked. The axe has fallen on Robert Selby at last!

RUTH. (*sorrowfully*) Oh, I'm sorry!

BOB. (*indicating* MISS SELBY, *still busy draping mantel*) Get her out of here a minute, will you? For heaven's sake—get her out.

RUTH. Oh, do come out on the balcony, Miss Selby. It's cooler there—and you'll enjoy the lights. And I want my aunt to know you.

MISS SELBY. Well, if my hair isn't too mussed from the train!

RUTH. Your hair is all right. Do come, Miss Selby.

MISS SELBY. And I didn't put it up in crimpin' pins—I had so much to do before I started—Comin' too, Robert?

BOB. Presently, Aunt Serena.

(*Exit onto balcony,* RUTH *and* MISS SELBY. *Outside*

the boys and girls sing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and other songs to end of act, the singing must grow softer and softer till end. Bob *lowers the light a bit—and illumination outside grows brighter as if by contrast. For a moment* Bob *sits, his face buried in his hands.*)

Bob. (*takes out card reading it thoughtfully*) I've flunked—flunked—what a disgrace—what a finish. And she, poor loving Aunt Serena, thought I had won the Fellowes prize—what a disappointment for her——

Ruth. (*enters softly and comes up to him*) I got away from the others as soon as I could.

Bob. I knew I was up against it all right a month ago, but somehow it didn't seem as if it could really happen. Flunked—By George!

Ruth. Isn't there some way out? Some way to get another chance?

Bob. Perhaps from Wilson—but Professor Turner will never give me credit for that physics. If I only had the notes!

Ruth. Can't you get them?

Bob. I think not. Well, Ruthie girl, you see you sized me up all right. Too much brawn in mine and not enough brain——

Ruth. I never said quite that.

Bob. But don't think it was just because I wanted to be a sort of hero that I made the most of myself in athletics. It was all for the sake of our Old Alma Mater. It was for her honor—her glory—I was working—just the same as any dig who turns out honor-man of his class. But—it seems I wasn't big enough to be a serious student too. I don't wonder that you were disappointed in me—had no more use for me.

Ruth. (*intensely*) What are you going to do—that's what I want to know. What are you going to do?

BOB. (*gritting his teeth*) Win out yet, by Jiminy!

RUTH. (*with emotion*) NOW, I'm not disappointed.

BOB. If you'll excuse me for a little while I'll take a turn round the campus until I get my head pulled together. I've disgraced the Selby name, and it will just about break Aunt Serena's heart. Of course—with all the fight I propose to put up—I may not be able to re-enter college next fall—but—the fight is on! And I'm going to win.

(*Pulls cap moodily over his eyes and exits.*)

RUTH. (*speaks slowly after him*) Bobbie, if you shouldn't come back next fall—what would the crew do—and the dramatic society—and the boys and —and—me—me—Bobbie! If you only knew—how much I cared! You've got to make good, Bobbie—you've got to. I say—we can't spare you!

(*Her voice breaks. She moves slowly toward balcony. Pushes aside the curtain and stands in a full blaze of light. Voices outside heard singing "Good Night Ladies."*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*University campus a week later. Rustic benches. Trees. Shrubbery etc.*

(MRS. MOORE *and* MISS SELBY *enter left cross path and come to rustic bench.*)

MRS. MOORE. I am glad you are feeling so much

better Miss Selby. We just want you to rest up and enjoy every minute of your visit.

Miss Selby. O thank you, I am quite rested now. The late hours and new faces tired me at first. I am afraid I've been a great bother to you.

Mrs. Moore. Not one bit in the world, you dear lady, if you'd only let us wait on you a little.

Miss Selby. I live very quietly at home, but I am so glad to have this opportunity to see Robert's friends, the college and all you who have been so kind to him.

Mrs. Moore. And we are so glad to have you here. You must make yourself perfectly at home and stay as long as ever you can. I hope the boys don't annoy you. Sometimes my table is a perfect Bedlam with all those noisy boys. And sometimes, it seems Miss Selby, as if my head would fly right off with all their rackets!

Miss Selby. They appear to be good boys, but I suppose they have not had the proper home training.

Mrs. Moore. They are the best fellows in the world, and well brought up too, Miss Selby. (*sniffs*) But I have noticed that home training slips off like water on a duck's back when a bunch of boys get together.

Mrs. Selby. (*sadly*) Yes I have noticed that even Robert is different.

Mrs. Moore. (*heartily*) Bob is a gentleman through and through. I haven't met many such, Miss Selby. You know I have had to take care of myself most of my life. Sometimes I think I could do more for the boys if I had had more opportunities.

Miss Selby. O, Mrs. Moore, I could never do what you do for them, and you understand them so well too. Now I don't believe I will ever get used to their ways, but Mrs. Moore I am so disappointed about the Prize.

RUTH. (*enters and goes to* MISS SELBY) I hope you are feeling more cheerful, Miss Selby. You mustn't be downcast about the prize business. Of course I know it was a big disappointment.

RUTH. (*eagerly, to* MISS SELBY) But Bobbie is all right, and ten times more popular with the fellows than Kent will ever be.

MISS SELBY. I'm not finding fault with my nephew—he's the dearest, best boy in the world in my eyes—but I can't help feeling that he hasn't made the best of his opportunities. Robert seems to have been a social lion, an athlete, and everything but a student.

RUTH. (*earnestly*) I'm sure Bobbie realizes his mistakes himself now.

MISS SELBY. I suppose I'm selfishly wrapped up in the boy. I might have known that Theodore Kent's son was just as likely to win a scholarship prize as my nephew—but to have him get a card from the faculty that means he must leave college in disgrace—(*puts handkerchief to eyes*)

RUTH. Oh, no, Miss Selby—he leaves the University with flying colors judged by the popular standard.

MRS. MOORE. (*nods*) That is one of the enigmas of the present student life!

MISS SELBY. I don't believe I'll ever get used to all this worship of athletics. My brother's student life in former days was so different!

RUTH. (*with an appreciative smile*) I suppose if he could see Bob and the others—practicing a Marathon run——

MISS SELBY. (*expressing horrified feeling of brother*) He'd send for the police! Bob's father was such a gentleman too—always dressed in black broadcloth and white ties—just like the clergy!

RUTH. (*laughs*) I wonder what he'd have thought of one of our familiar visions—a hundred students

swaggering down the campus with their hands in the pockets of drab corduroys, dusty sombreros pulled down over their noses, and their scholarly bosoms covered with husky sweaters in forty different stages of dilapidation!

MRS. MOORE. (*smiles*) Yes, times have changed, Miss Selby, but the boys hearts are all right, my dear.

MISS SELBY. (*nods rather dubiously*) Yes, but it's heads that count in college, isn't it?

MRS. MOORE. (*rising*) Well, I must go now and see if dinner is on the way. Perhaps you would like to take Miss Selby over to the boat-house, Ruth.

RUTH. I should love to do so. (*exit* MRS. MOORE) Do you care to see it, Miss Selby?

MISS SELBY. Some other time, dear, before I go away. Just now I'd rather sit and talk with you. It seems to me you look a little tired—as if you'd been working too hard.

RUTH. We are always in more or less of a mad rush here. Sometimes I think college life is just a mental gymnasium to test the strength of every capacity a person possesses. But at the present moment I'm not so much tired as worried. It seems to me that I must manage to help Bob somehow—he and I have been such good friends.

MISS SELBY. The boy is working so hard now—at his desk almost every minute since I came!

RUTH. Miss Selby, I have an idea that I know some one who has those physics notes if I just dared ask for them.

MISS SELBY. That's what I heard him say he needed worst—those lecture notes. My poor Robert!

RUTH. Don't let him know that you pity him whatever you do, Miss Selby. It is for his good that you shouldn't. We mustn't pity him—but just help him if we can. (HOWARD *enters up stage and starts*

to cross campus. RUTH *sees and hails him*) Oh, wait a minute, Howard, will you?

HOWARD. (*lifting hat*) As a waiter I am peerless. (*comes down*)

RUTH. (*eagerly*) Can you tell me if Mousie Kent was at Student Body election this afternoon?

HOWARD. He was—sitting off alone as usual.

RUTH. And do you know where he went from there?

HOWARD. Usually at this hour he is in his room buried in a profound book. But a strange change has come over Kent of recent days.

RUTH. How?

HOWARD. He's growing human, almost sentimental. In fact I saw him ambling moonily toward the lake as I came up the campus.

RUTH. Which way? (HOWARD *looks at her and gives an amazed whistle*) Oh, you needn't act as if you thought there was any crush on between Mousie and me, for there isn't. This is a business matter in the interests of—of—a friend.

HOWARD. (*looking off*) Methinks I see the gentleman yonder. He is walking abstractedly toward a flag pole.

RUTH. (*following* HOWARD'S *glance*) There—he ran into it!

HOWARD. And bumped his nose! That's characteristic of Mousie all right.

RUTH. I must catch him. Excuse me Miss Selby, and I'll explain to you later. (HOWARD *lifts his hat and exits*) Anyhow there comes Bob. (*as she makes hasty exit,* BOB *enters leisurely from opposite side*)

MISS SELBY. Ruth has just gone.

BOB. (*looking after her*) I know it. Every time she sees me she does the disappearing act. I have had scarcely a word with her since you arrived a week ago.

MISS SELBY. (*smiles enigmatically*) The ways of women are passing strange.

BOB. (*moodily sits beside her*) Aunt Serena, I am up against it for those physics notes, and I guess it's to be a long period of home and the hoe for Bobbie, with interludes of running the Weekly News and planting fence-posts. Professor Turner will give me a chance IF I make up the conditions during the summer—nor otherwise. I can do it if only I can be helped out on those notes, but if I can't——

MISS SELBY. I've got the feeling somehow that maybe you will be. (*looks after* RUTH—*his eyes follow hers*)

BOB. (*jealously*) I wonder if Ruth really finds Mousie Kent interesting. She looks as if she did. Lucky old Mouse! Well, I must get back to my desk! I've more than one scheme in mind that may make you proud of me yet, Aunt Serena.

MISS SELBY. Well, just so it isn't anything that breaks your neck or legs while you're doing it. I'll walk up to the dormitory with you.

BOB. You are the kindest, most liberal little woman that ever lived. Shall we go in now. (*rises, escorts* MISS SELBY *up stage*)

MISS SELBY. Yes, I want to dress before dinner, (*touches his sweater lovingly but somewhat reprovingly*) and dear won't you put on a white shirt, just for the evening.

BOB. (*kisses her and laughs*) Course I will, Aunt Serena, you're bound to make a gentleman of me. (*turns as he goes in*) I wonder what Ruth wanted of Kent? (*exit* SELBY *and* AUNT SERENA)

(*Enter from opposite side* RUTH, *followed by* MOUSIE KENT.)

MOUSIE. I am honored, Miss Moore, that you should care to talk with me. I—I find that my

society is not interesting to the girls as a rule. How can I serve you?

RUTH. (*smiles*) Now what made you guess that I was going to ask a favor of you?

MOUSIE. I usually find that there is some string to it when the girls care to talk to me. You'll pardon my frankness in saying so?

RUTH. (*a trifle nonplussed*) Oh, Mr. Kent, you shouldn't look at it like that.

MOUSIE. Then you didn't have any special object in hailing me?

RUTH. (*evasively, confused*) Hasn't this been a glorious day? Ideal weather for Junior week.

MOUSIE. I suppose so. I hadn't noticed.

RUTH. (*looking off*) Isn't the lake lovely? Such colors! I wonder what gives it that strange violet tint.

MOUSIE. (*in his element for the first time*) The phenomena of light is the result of the undulations which the luminous body excites in the luminiferous ether pervading all space, and the molecular interstices of all bodies. The presence of atmospheric dust combined with the reflections from the water, gives color to the ether set in motion by the sun, and the result is——

(*He gives a generally expansive gesture and then looks at* RUTH *as if for complete understanding from her of the facts detailed.*)

RUTH. (*with flattering admiration*) How well informed you are! I never heard any student state facts more clearly.

MOUSIE. Physics is my specialty, you know.

RUTH. (*guardedly*) Seems to me that I have heard that it was. So difficult too! How did you ever happen to choose physics?

MOUSIE. I always had a bent in that direction. I have ambitions to become an expert. I shall try for the assistantship here after I graduate.

RUTH. A college professor! Just think of it! But it's a natural evolution after all. You've been such a scholarly student—taken careful notes in all your classes——

MOUSIE. Ah, Miss Moore, I pride myself upon my clear and voluminous notes! I have them all in separate tablets—type-written and indexed!

RUTH. Mr. Kent, will you loan me your note-book on Professor Turner's Physics course?

MOUSIE. Did I describe the book so intersting'y then?

RUTH. Oh, I wanted the notes long before that—before I spoke to you this afternoon, in fact.

MOUSIE. (*mournfully*) The string—I knew it! There always IS a string.

RUTH. Well, suppose for this once I own to the string. Will you loan me those notes?

MOUSIE. With pleasure.

RUTH. Oh, thank you! (*clasps her hands in gratitude*)

MOUSIE. On one condition.

RUTH. What condition?

MOUSIE. That you do not permit them to fall into the hands of Mr. Robert Selby.

RUTH. So the favor has a string to it too! (*coldly*) Never mind then, Mr. Kent. Keep your notes to yourself.

MOUSIE. Wait a minute Miss Moore, please.

RUTH. Well?

MOUSIE. Let me explain my position in this matter.

RUTH. Explain? Evidently you know perfectly well that for the want of those notes Bobbie must meet disgrace at the hands of Professor Turner. You could save him, and you refuse. There is only one explanation—you are not his friend.

MOUSIE. No, there's another one. Bob Selby has everything that I have not—popularity—athletic skill

—looks, also the admiration of the only girl I ever cared for in my life. We entered college together. All I could do was grind, while listening to the big splash he was making. The Fellowes prize and my record in Physics are the only cards in the deck that I hold over him. Why should I turn over any of my scant honors to him to add to his triumphs——

RUTH. But it takes nothing away from you—being only a loan—and to enable him to keep from being flunked out of college——

MOUSIE. Shall I confess something that will make you hate me very hard?

RUTH. (*bewildered*) Confess?

MOUSIE. (*with bitterness*) I've wanted to see Selby flunked out of college. I hoped it might give me a little superiority in your eyes if he went under with all his good looks and social honors. While that hope has died out now—since I realize the extreme interest you take in his case—I feel no more kindly toward him than I did.

RUTH. Mousie Kent, I feel sorry for you.

MOUSIE. (*moved*) You do?

RUTH. Don't misunderstand me! I'm sorry that you don't realize why you haven't friends, popularity. I have heard you complain before that you weren't good looking, and lively and affable and that that accounted for it. But it doesn't. You're so wrapped up in your own narrow life that you don't know—never have known—the glory of giving yourself to your friends and for your friends.

MOUSIE. What reward——

RUTH. (*quickly interrupting*) Giving without hope of reward, or thought of it. That's what Bobbie Selby does—that's why everybody likes him.

MOUSIE. I'll make a note of that and think it over.

RUTH. It wouldn't hurt you to take a few notes

on friendship. It's the subject you need most, Mr. Kent, if I am any judge.

(MOUSIE *produces a book from his pocket—she goes on talking without noticing this move on his part.*)

The man who wants friends must learn how to be a friend—(*he makes notes as she talks*) and to know how to be a friend, a real friend, is to help when help is needed—and the knowledge of just that is worth more than all the product of grind you can pile up in a thousand years!

MOUSIE. (*sourly*) I'd be a good friend enough if others were friendly to me.

RUTH. There you are! Trying to make it a matter of an eye for an eye. Friendship is a gift or it is nothing. (*growing more and more indignant*) Oh, I'd rather be Bob Selby's big, generous self flunked out of college, than you—narrow and dwarfed as you stand now—if you were elected President tomorrow, Good-afternoon!

(*Exits, chin in air.*)

MOUSIE. (*quietly, as if having received a valuable if disagreeable hint*) Notes! (*sits and scribbles*)

(*Enter* BOB, *rushed on by* HOWARD *and* CHESTER *and other students. They give a college yell as they enter. They are followed by* MRS. MOORE, MISS SELBY, DAISY, ETHEL *and* GENEVIEVE. MOUSIE *remains to one side, scribbling.*)

BOB. Great Scott! why am I shanghaied at the domitory door and brought aboard like this?

HOWARD. Why weren't you at your funeral this afternoon?

BOB. (*puzzled*) What's the trouble? What has happened?

ETHEL. (*advances slightly toward group,* DAISY *and* GENEVIEVE *at either side of her*) You're elected!

GENEVIEVE. Head coach!

DICK. Bob looks stunned!

CHESTER. I believe he'd forgotten he was in line for the honor.

BOB. I had forgotten.

DAISY. Speech! Speech!

GENEVIEVE. Don't be bashful! (*as* RUTH *enters*) Why weren't you at Student Body meeting, Ruth Moore?

RUTH. Why, what happened?

OMNES. Head-coach elected!

HOWARD. Three cheers for Bobbie and——

BOB. No—please don't. Fellows, I thank you for the honor you have offered me—but (*exhibits pink card*) this explains why I cannot think of accepting it.

HOWARD. Oh, come now, Bob. Surely old Turner came through when you explained everything?

BOB. Not unless I produce those notes on his pet lectures—and that is impossible. It's hard to say no, fellows. I'd rather be head-coach than a millionaire, but I'd rather be game in a pinch than either. Without those notes—I've got to slave like a Trojan all summer. You'll have to give Harding the job.

MISS SELBY. I don't know whether Robert is right or wrong, but I do know he is giving up something that would prove a great happiness to him.

MRS. MOORE. And it means giving up a thousand a year too!

HOWARD. Hang the thousand a year! It means the best man for the job can't take it!

MOUSIE. (*quietly, advancing*) Maybe he can. Selby, if those Physics notes of mine will be of any help to you, I'll send them around to-night.

BOB. You—of all men! Why should YOU do this?

MOUSIE. (*reads from notes in embarrassed haste*) "The man who wants friends must know how to be a friend—a friend in need, and that's worth more than all the product of grind you can pile up in a thousand years." Am I right, Miss Moore?

RUTH. You are—and there's the hand of a friend to prove it. (*gives him her hand*)

BOB. And my hand, with a thousand thanks, old chap!

HOWARD. I say, Mousie, we've all been misjudging you—but you're the real thing after all—and hereafter you're one of us! (*he shakes* MOUSIE'S *hand, and others do likewise rapidly in turn*)

DICK. (*referring to* BOB) And now that Richard is himself again—all hail to the new varsity coach!

(*Students lift him to their shoulders.*)

OMNES. (*following the crowd as they start marching around stage with* BOB) Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! for The Varsity Coach.

(*Waving of handkerchiefs, singing of College songs, general shouting until fall of curtain.*)

CURTAIN.

TIME—A year later.

ACT IV.

SCENE:—*College Campus illuminated with lanterns and decorated with Flags, etc.,—The general effect to be a gala night on the Campus by moonlight, as it is the night of the Senor Class Reception. While this scene should be elab-*

orate as possible, the decorations, etc., must be left to the artistic taste of the Stage Manager with whatever material may be available.

The curtain rises on the Grand March which inaugurates the Senior Dance. The March introduces all the characters and as many more couples as may be obtainable, so as to make the march a feature by introducing as many couples as possible, the girls wearing their pretty costumes, which will give the scene a realistic effect. Of course this can be modified if required.

The Students carry college flags, banners, etc., —They indulge in fancy marching evolutions lasting for a space of twelve or fifteen minutes when the march breaks up into a waltz, and the action of the play is resumed. This introduction should be carefully studied out and prepared for it adds greatly to the atmosphere and general effectiveness of the final act.

(*As the waltz stops* OMNES *exit except* MOUSIE *and* GENEVIEVE *who come down.*)

GENEVIEVE. (*fanning herself*) What a lovely waltz. You never danced at all last year!

MOUSIE. Since then I've learned that it is better to live in a sort of sandwitch fashion—a layer of work, and a layer of play, very systematically arranged.

GENEVIEVE. Well, I believe myself that a life of all work or all play is a failure.

MOUSIE. I am trying very hard to become a shining example of the sandwich system.

GENEVIEVE. You're succeeding splendidly!

MOUSIE. Miss Ruth Moore was responsible for my change of heart. She gave me a calling down a year ago that jolted me so hard it cracked my scholastic shell and released me.

GENEVIEVE. And you don't know how you've improved since you've been one of the fellows!

MOUSIE. Thank you! I'm proud to be called "one of the fellows."

(*Enter* BOB, RUTH, HOWARD, DAISY, MISS SELBY.)

RUTH. Oh, Miss Selby, we are all so happy to have you with us again—and for the Senior dance.

MISS SELBY. I just couldn't miss it. I've danced every dance so far but three. Bob, do you think I am getting too giddy for the guardian aunt of a college man?

BOB. (*fondly and laughingly*) You've always been a sport at heart, only you didn't know it, Aunt Serena.

RUTH. She's always been a college-girl at heart—just as I hope I always shall be.

DAISY. And I!

HOWARD. This certainly has been a great year. It's made a rooter out of Miss Selby, a sassiety man out of Mousie (*slaps* MOUSIE *on the back as he comes down with* GENEVIEVE), a dig of Bob——

BOB. (*interrupting*) And an engaged man of old Howard here!

HOWARD. (*drawing* DAISY'S *arm proudly through his own*) Can you blame me? she said she wasn't looking for furniture, but——

DAISY. (*looking at him affectionately*) This choice specimen of the antique was something I couldn't quite forego.

GENEVIEVE. (*turning up her nose slightly*) O spoons!

MRS. MOORE. (*entering*) Miss Selby, I've been looking for you everywhere. Professor Brown says he wants to put his name on your card as his partner in the Reel——

MISS SELBY. (*in mock agitation*) My gracious, let's go find him before he makes up his mind to ask some one else!

(*Exits, followed by* MRS. MOORE. MOUSIE *and* GENEVIEVE. HOWARD *and* DAISY *exit, chatting, and* RUTH *and* BOB *are left alone. They sit on rustic bench.*)

RUTH. Tell me all about it, Bobbie. Why aren't you happy at the Senior dance when you've made such a splendid year's record in your studies, and are chosen valedictorian of your class?

BOB. You guessed I wasn't happy then?

RUTH. I didn't guess—I knew. What's the matter, Bob?

BOB. I heard some news to-night, Ruth, that made me feel as if I had received another pink card.

RUTH. Why, how is that possible?

BOB. (*drawing a newspaper from his pocket*) The Hammond home paper. It says that the prize for the college opera, for which as is customary, this year's Seniors have competed, has been awarded to a Hammond boy——

RUTH. (*eagerly*) A Hammond boy?

BOB. The same who won the Fellowes prize last year—Mousie Kent!

RUTH. (*amazed*) Mousie Kent! Is it possible? Why, I never dreamed he was artistic, or poetic, or imaginative enough for that.

BOB. He was, it seems.

RUTH. But why should that make you blue? So long as you weren't one of the competitors yourself——

BOB. But I was. I've been slaving at it for a whole year in secret. You see—I wanted to do something more than merely pull out of the mess I was in, Ruth. I'd met my Waterloo and had set my mind on making up for it in some way to the old University—to Aunt Serena—and to you, Ruth. I put the best of which I was capable into the opera—and only to fail. I tell you it's a set-back!

RUTH. Don't look at it that way. After all—the glory was in the trying—real success means doing one's best—not the result of one's best! And think of your splendid record for the year——

BOB. How good of you, Ruthie, to try to make me see the bright side! But—it means more than you think—my failing to land the prize. It may change the course of my whole future life.

RUTH. How is that possible?

BOB. That opera was woven of fair dreams that I hoped to see realized. A girl's sweet face looked out at me from every page. To succeed meant to make me feel worthy in a slight degree to ask that girl to be my inspiration through life. But now—it wouldn't be right to tell her how I love her—how I have loved her from that first serious talk we had together when she tried first to make a real student of me.

RUTH. (*smiling tenderly but mischievously*) So now you intend to keep your devotion a secret, eh?

BOB. You're not laughing at me, Ruth?

RUTH. No, I'm laughing because I'm so happy, Bob. Why, don't you realize that your caring for me is enough to make me forget— (MOUSIE *and* GENEVIEVE *enter unseen*)

BOB. Ruth! (*he seizes both her hands in his*)

MOUSIE. I beg pardon.

BOB. (*turning rather impatiently*) You ought to.

MOUSIE. (*excitedly*) I just thought I'd like to ask somebody's congratulations. I can't keep it to myself, you know——

BOB. (*walking up manfully and giving* MOUSIE *his hand*) I do congratulate you, Kent, with all my heart. I'd give anything to have won the prize myself——

MOUSIE. (*half apprehensively*) Wh-what, you wanted Genevieve too? (*slips an arm about* GENEVIEVE)

BOB. Heavens, no! (*as* GENEVIEVE *pouts*) Excuse me, Genevieve, but I—I mean I was speaking of another prize entirely—the one for the college opera——

MOUSIE. I want to be congratulated on something worth while—my engagement. Genevieve has consented to be Mrs. Assistant Professor for life!

RUTH. (*kisses* GENEVIEVE) Oh, I'm so glad for you, Gen! And I hope you'll be very happy. Congratulations, Mousie! (*gives him her hand*)

BOB. And I. (*shakes* KENT'S *hand*) But I must congratulate you on the opera too!

MOUSIE. I didn't compete. Why should you congratulate me?

RUTH. (*amazed*) Didn't compete?

MOUSIE. Never took notes on opera in my life. Loathe opera!

BOB. But the Hammond paper——

MOUSIE. Expects me to go on winning all the prizes just because I won the Fellowes one last year. It's a mistake—that's all.

HOWARD. (*appearing at side*) Silence in the court. (*enters, followed by* OMNES *not already on the stage*) Stand forth, Robert Selby!

BOB. What on earth are you driving at?

MISS SELBY. (*with hysterical joy*) At you, my dearest nephew!

HOWARD. (*reads loudly from scroll in his hand*) Notice! The prize for this year's college opera has been awarded to Mr. Robert Selby of Hammond, Illinois!

BOB. (*in blank astonishment*) Great Scott!

HOWARD. (*continues reading*) "This is considered a singular honor as the opera is supposed to be in excellent literary form, and to embody in a popular and worthy manner the ideals of the university, to be passed on from one outgoing class to the next as typical of what his college years have meant

to the graduate. It is with great pleasure that we award the prize to Mr. Selby's opera, entitled The Varsity Coach, because the author has always shown a splendid college spirit, which has manifested itself in every sphere of college activity. It seems most fitting that he should be the prize winner for the college opera of 19—

MISS SELBY. (*almost weeping*) Oh, Robert, Robert, my dear boy! (*embraces him*)

DICK. How did you do it, Bob—how did you ever do it?

CHESTER. It's great, Bob—I'm mighty glad!

MRS. MOORE. What's the opera about? Won't you tell us, Bob?

CHESTER. Who is the leading lady?

BOB. The opera is about college life. The leading lady? Well, you all know there's never been but one leading lady in my individual college life—and when the opera is produced—will you take the part, Ruth?

RUTH. (*shyly*) I'll think it over?

BOB. There's another and longer contract I'd like to offer you——

RUTH. (*smiles*) I'll think that over, too!

MOUSIE. I say, fellows, here's three cheers for Robert Selby—who is welcome to all the prizes—(*draws Genevieve toward him*) but one!

HOWARD. Three cheers and a tiger!

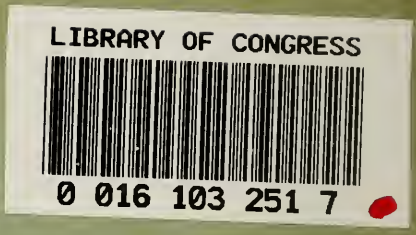
(BOB *stands with* RUTH *at one side of him and* MISS SELBY *the other, smiling and happy.*)

OMNES. Rah, rah, rah, Tiger!

CURTAIN.

SECOND CURTAIN. Everybody dancing the Virginia Reel.

OCT 16 1912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